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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

INFORMATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

VA 4  
APR 1 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Jack Anderson article on VA Medical Care

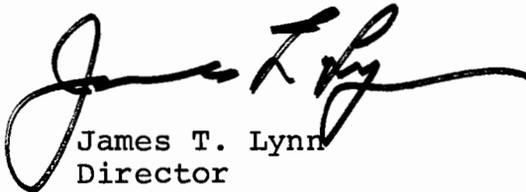
In Thursday's Washington Post, Jack Anderson reports on poor care in VA hospitals, citing letters from staff members of VA hospitals. He closes the article with a quote from the VA Chief Medical Director that the situation is becoming a "crisis".

Anderson's examples are not pinpointed specifically enough to permit verification. On the other hand, the following facts are well documented.

- VA was ordered to conduct a thorough review of quality of care throughout its hospital system last summer, employing VA and outside medical experts. The survey included site visits, extensive questionnaires of both staff and patients, and checks on structural deficiencies. The results of the survey were documented in a detailed report made public last fall.
- The 1976 VA budget provides funds and staff to implement the recommendations of the VA Quality Survey. The budget proposes 1975 supplemental appropriations of \$35 million and \$226 million in 1976 to upgrade medical facilities and for an increase of over 9,000 average employment in 1976--at a time when staffing of almost every other agency in the Government was being cut back or held nearly level. Most of the added staff goes to improve basic care in hospital wards--but the ongoing improvement in technical quality of care has not been overlooked: In 1976, the budget adds 63 specialized medical service units, 32 mental hygiene clinics, and continues activation of 3 new hospitals.
- The improvements proposed in this year's budget carry forward a momentum already established over the years.

## Some key statistics:

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
VA Medical Care Ap- propriation (\$ mil- lions BA)	1,361	2,859	3,289	3,668
VA Hospital Con- struction (\$ mil- lions BA)	53	108	298	387
VA Medical Care Staff (average employment in thousands)	133	158	164	173
VA Hospital Staff/ hundred patients	117	157	159	167
Number of patients treated in VA hospitals (000)	762	1,072	1,115	1,166



James T. Lynn  
Director